

Job Hunting in Maine

Putting the Pieces Together

May 2013



Provided by

MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF
LABOR

CareerCenter
The Maine Employment Resource

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Job Hunting in Maine

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Job hunting is never easy, whether you are looking for your first job, trying to find another job or striving for a promotion. This book is filled with tips and techniques to make your search go faster and be more successful.

After reading through *Job Hunting in Maine*, you should come away with:

- An introduction to CareerCenters located throughout the state and how you can use the services available to you through “The Maine Employment Resource.”
- The latest tips and techniques to enhance your job search.

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and the Maine CareerCenter

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the guide to find specific ways
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The Maine CareerCenter Network

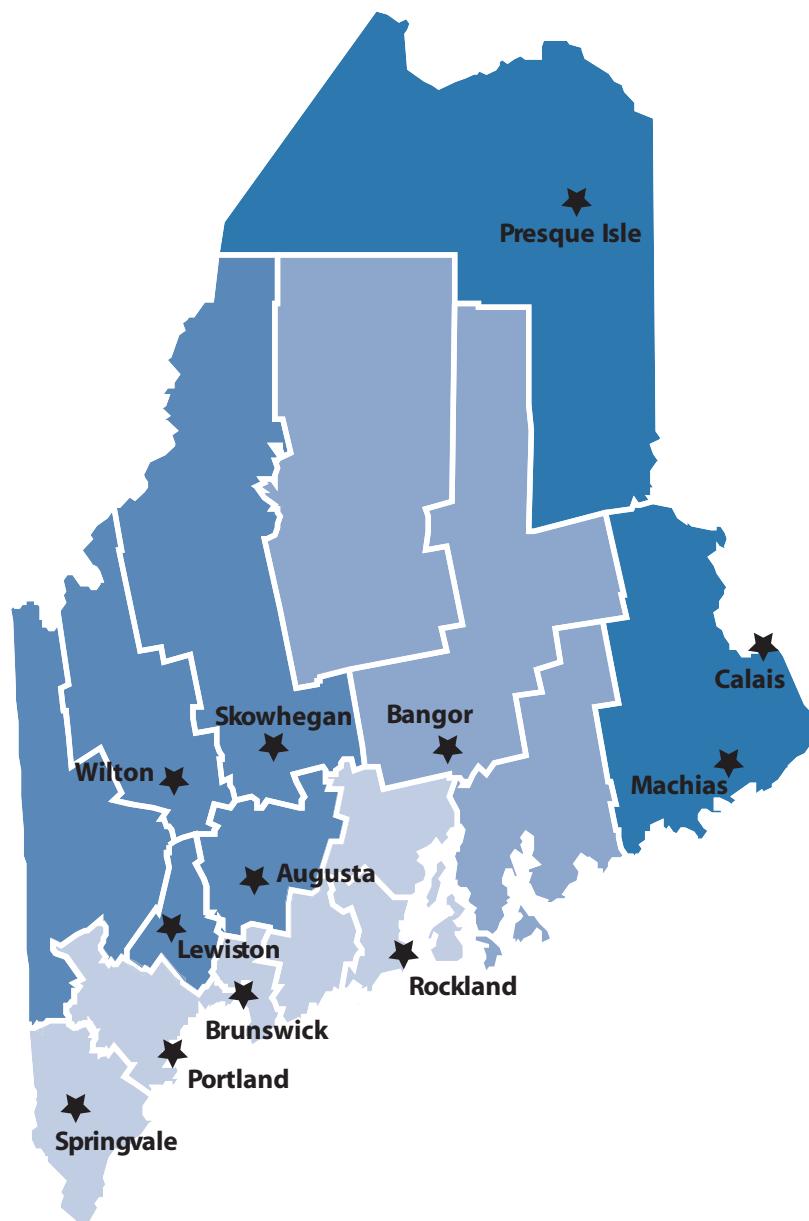
The **Maine CareerCenter** provides a variety of employment and training services at **no charge for Maine workers and businesses.**

It is the place to start when you're looking for your first job, your next job, a better job – or a whole new career. You do not need to be claiming unemployment benefits or be out of work to use our services.

The CareerCenter system is a collaboration of the Maine Department of Labor, Local Workforce Investment Boards, and employment, education, and training providers. There are 12 full-service centers and additional service points and partner providers located throughout the state.

For a complete list of locations, visit:

www.mainecareercenter.com



CareerCenter Services

CareerCenters offers services in both individual and group settings.

Some CareerCenters may invite you to attend an orientation session to find out what kinds of services you are eligible for. Ask the staff person at your local CareerCenter Information Center how to get started.

Workshops: CareerCenters offer workshops and classes on a variety of topics including networking, job search techniques, résumé writing, and more.

Job Fairs: get an online list of upcoming job fairs in your area or around the state.

For a list of workshops and job fairs near you, visit: www.mainecareercenter.com.

Training Programs

CareerCenter staff can help you determine what programs are available to assist you and put you in touch with the best education and training resources in your area.

Special Services

We offer services for veterans, older workers, young people, laid-off workers, people exploring a career change and people with disabilities. If you're a job seeker with a special need, the CareerCenter can assist you.

Priority of Service for Veterans

The CareerCenter offers specialized employment and training services for veterans. If you served in the U.S. Armed Forces, a CareerCenter Veterans Representative can help you find a job, get new skills, or access other state or federal resources available to you. Veterans and eligible spouses are given priority of service for the receipt of employment, training and placement services provided under all Maine Department of Labor-funded programs. For more information about Priority of Service for Veterans and Eligible Spouses, or to determine if you are eligible, visit: www.mainecareercenter.com/veterans.

The Information Center

The Information Center is open to job seekers at no cost for education and employment-related purposes.

The library has literature about:

- Résumé writing and interviewing skills
- Economics, the labor market, employment trends and specific industries
- Career planning and exploration, job hunting and starting a business
- Businesses, education and training resources, and support services
- Labor laws and regulations

The computer center provides:

- Access to Internet, computers and software to prepare résumés, search for jobs online, or file your unemployment claim
- Wireless Internet access (WiFi) for use with your wireless-capable laptop (at most CareerCenter locations)
- Access to telephone, fax and copier for education and employment-related purposes

Maine's Job Bank

Start your job search by registering for Maine's Job Bank.

- Accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Search for job openings based upon your individual qualifications
- Get matched with employers looking for your skills
- Receive automatic e-mail notifications when jobs that match your qualifications and preferences are posted
- Post a résumé that can be sent to employers
- résumé building
- intelligent matching

Coming soon

As Maine's Job Bank evolves, additional web-based solutions will be added, supporting job seekers, students, employers, and career counselors with a full range of job placement and career exploration tools including:

- training referral
- career mapping

Virtual CareerCenter

You can access many of the resources of the CareerCenter by visiting our website:

www.mainecareercenter.com

- Search Maine's Job Bank
- Find information on CareerCenter programs and services
- Research training and education opportunities
- File your unemployment claims
- Link to hundreds of other employment resources

Maine's Job Bank Career Center

www.mainecareercenter.com



Rehabilitation Services

The **Maine Department of Labor, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS)** works to bring about full access to employment, independence and community integration for people with disabilities through its three primary provision units:

The **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)** assists eligible individuals with disabilities who wish to achieve or retain employment in the community. Any individual who is committed to work and has a disability that creates a barrier to employment is encouraged to apply for assistance. Services begin with an application, eligibility determination, and a comprehensive assessment of rehabilitation needs. The program provides counseling and guidance, the development of an individualized employment plan, and provision of services required for a specific employment goal that help people move to successful job placement. High school students are encouraged to apply or be referred for services within two years of graduation or exit from the school.

The **Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI)** can provide many services to persons with severe visual impairments. For an individual who has a vision problem that prevents them from carrying out the activities of daily living, getting an education or a job, programs include:

- Education Program for children who are blind or have a visual impairment
- Business Enterprise Program
- Independent Living Programs

The **Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing & Late Deafened (DDHHLD)** provides a variety of services for Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing and Late-Deafened citizens of Maine, including:

- Information, referral and advocacy
- The handbook “Resources: A Guide to Services for People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing”

Applications for Vocational Rehabilitation services are available at CareerCenters or by contacting your local DVR/DBVI office.

Workforce Development

Workforce Development helps people return to work. There is retraining assistance for people who have lost their jobs because of layoffs, closings or other dislocations. People who are receiving assistance such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) also may be eligible for retraining. Some programs help people who are or have been seasonal farm workers. Check with your local CareerCenter to find out if you may be eligible for retraining services.



Career & Life Planning Process

Making decisions about what you do for work is a very important step.

Your career has an impact on every part of your life. Work may determine where you live, how much time you have to spend with your family and whether or not you can enjoy your favorite leisure activities as much as you would like. The following section outlines a process that can assist you in making career and life decisions.

The CareerCenter can provide tools and support for your decision making.

Making a good career and life decision has several steps. We will take a look at each step of the career and life decision process and make recommendations as to which CareerCenter resources might be most helpful to you.



**Look for this icon throughout
the guide to find specific ways
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with your job search!**



Job Search Stress

Many people have compared being out of work to facing a death in the family or a personal illness. There is a grief process of letting go of the old job before you can move into a new job successfully.

Many people handle these ups and downs with the support of family and friends. Let them know how you feel. Your family is under stress too.

If you are experiencing more than your share of down times, then find a professional you can talk to. A counselor, a clergy member or a support group may be able to help you move toward reaching your goal.

If you have lost your job, you may be going through the **four stages of grief**:

1. Denial

- This can't be happening!
- I'm fine.

2. Anger

- Why me?
- It's not fair!
- Who is to blame?

3. Mourning

- I'm so sad, why bother?
- What's the point?

4. Acceptance

- It's going to be OK
- I can't fight it. I might as well prepare for it.

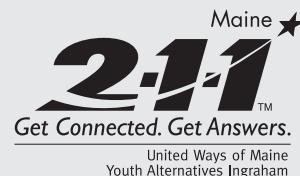
Tips for Handling Job Search Stress

- Talk positively to yourself
- Get organized
- Create a schedule
- Get dressed
- Volunteer
- Set goals
- Create learning opportunities
- Try new things
- Eat healthy foods, exercise
- Have some fun

Online Resources

www.211maine.org

One number — thousands of services. 2-1-1 is an easy-to-remember number that connects people who want to give help or get help with a full range of health and human services in their community.



2-1-1 Maine, Inc. is a nonprofit organization formed in partnership with United Ways of Maine and Youth Alternatives Ingraham to provide a health and human services information and referral service system to serve the entire State of Maine — every day and in times of crisis.

You can access this statewide directory of over 9,000 resources either by dialing 211 on your phone or online at: www.211maine.org

To Change or Not to Change

It makes sense that you want to do the same work you have been doing in the past. You went into that kind of work because it appealed to you. A potential problem is that people continue to lose their jobs in your line of work; you may be a perfect example.

To stay in your field and have some degree of security, you need to be able to answer some questions.

- According to the want ads and employment agencies, how much demand is there for the work I do?
- As a result of layoffs, are there lots of other people looking for my type of work?
- Is there reason to believe that the demand for my type of skills will pick up soon?
- Would I be willing to relocate if it meant finding work in my current field?
- Would I be willing to take a cut in salary and/or benefits if it meant I could work in my current field?
- Would updating my skills or education mean I could work in my field? Am I willing (and able) to get that training?

You need reassuring answers to each of these questions; otherwise, you will spend months or longer looking for a job that no longer exists, or you could actually find such a job and then lose it again a short time later.

But what if you want to do something else?

Maybe you want to make a career change because your previous career just isn't offering opportunity or security anymore.

You may also have personal reasons for switching careers, such as your desire to work different hours to better accommodate the needs of your family. And you may have other professional reasons for changing, such as a desire to work more with people and less with computers – or vice versa!

Perhaps the most important reason for switching careers is this: "I've always thought I'd like to do this kind of work."



Self-Assessment

Everyone is capable of doing many jobs well. You may like doing some of these jobs better than others. To find those jobs you would do best and enjoy most, it is helpful to do a self-assessment when you are making a career choice.

Self-assessment requires you to take a look at yourself.

You may discover or confirm which jobs give you the most satisfaction. You may also explore those things you seem to have a natural talent for or ability to do. This might give you some clues about what areas of the job market might be best for you to explore as you are searching for a new career.

A part of self-assessment is identifying your **knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs)**. You should be able to identify those key skills you want to use in your next job. KSAs may be classified into three categories:

- **Technical knowledge**

Examples: a license to run a forklift or literacy in certain computer software

- **Traits that make you a valuable worker**

Examples: a good attendance record or ability to learn quickly

- **Transferable skills**

Examples: project management or customer service skills

You should think about how much you enjoy using your skills with data, people or things. These are worker preferences. Worker preferences describe those things you most enjoy doing at work. Of course, no job is exclusively working with data, people or things, but some jobs have more of one than another does.

It is also important to remember that each work site may have a different job description for the same job title. For example, one insurance clerk spends the majority of their day processing information and data, while another insurance clerk speaks with customers, answering questions about payments or claims that have been filed — same job title, very different description.

Online Resources

Career Exploration Tools from U.S. Dept. of Labor

My Next Move – www.mynextmove.org

This tool is aimed at providing job seekers with information on more than 900 occupations, as well as local job openings and training opportunities in a simple, user-friendly format. My Next Move is intended to assist all job seekers. It may be especially useful for students, young adults and other first-time workers as they explore potential careers based on their interests.



mySkills myFuture – www.myskillsmymfuture.org

This site is designed to help those with previous work experience match their existing skills to new occupations.



Read the following descriptions of the three worker preferences. Think about how you prefer to use your skills. Do you prefer to use your skills working with data, people or things?

People

People skills include all effective interactions with people on the job. These skills include how you communicate verbally or non-verbally with other people.

Some examples of people skills include:

- teaching
- leading
- coaching
- managing others
- customer service
- selling and persuading

Do you like to work with people?

Do you have skills:

- with individuals one-on-one?
- with groups, organizations or the public?
- caring for people or animals?

Information, Data, Ideas

You are using data skills when you work with any kind of information. Data may be facts, numbers, ideas, impressions or feelings.

When you work with data, you may be:

- sending or receiving information
- analyzing or interpreting
- creating
- managing information or putting it to work

Do you like to work with data?

Are you good at:

- gathering or creating information, data or ideas?
- storing or retrieving information, data or ideas?
- putting information, data or ideas to use?
- managing information, data or ideas
 - step-by-step?
 - by seeing the big picture?

Things

When you work with things, you work with your hands or use your physical skills at work.

Working with things includes:

- making, repairing, loading or unloading products
- using equipment such as computers or driving trucks
- being a dancer or participating on a sports team
- being able to visualize and accurately draw or record space, dimensions, rooms or buildings
- growing plants or animals as a product

Do you like to work with things?

Are you good at:

- physical performances?
- handling materials or objects?
- making things?
- operating or repairing equipment, machinery or vehicles?
- visualizing or drawing spaces, buildings or rooms?
- growing plants or animals?

KSA Quiz

Here is an activity that will help you discover some of your **knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs)** and how you prefer to use these at work. Make a list and write them down in the space provided. Answer these questions to the best of your ability. There are no right or wrong answers. Whatever you answer will give you a clue about your KSAs and worker preferences.

- 1. What did you enjoy about the last work you did?** Even if you disliked most of it, think about one thing you did like. If you have no paid work experience, think about a volunteer experience or other activities.

- 2. What do you enjoy learning about?** This does not have to be formal training. We learn from others, from television, or from reading as well as from going to school.

- 3. What do you do that receives compliments from other people (friends, family, co-workers)?**

- 4. What work (paid or volunteer) experience are you most proud of?**

- 5. When you need to recharge your energy level, do you want to be with others for companionship and support or need to be alone to relax and think things over?**

- 6. If you could do anything in the world for work, what would it be?** (Don't worry about time, money or other details here!)

What your answers to the KSA quiz may tell you

1. Look for patterns in your answers.

If you find common themes in your answers to multiple questions, you might consider changing your career path to include a different kind of job with more of the aspects you enjoy. Don't focus only on a job title. Instead, look at the description of responsibilities.

2. If you are interested enough to continue lifelong learning about something, then perhaps you have enough knowledge or skill to be a successful job candidate in that area.

Passion for what you enjoy can be the most rewarding part of a career.

3. If you do something that consistently receives compliments, then you have a skill in that area.

Sometimes you are good at something and don't even realize that you make a special contribution. Those who work with you and those who know you well can often see skills you can't, and you may overlook those things that come very easily to you. Those just may be the things you do best.

4. Things you have done well and are proud of can tell you a lot about your strengths.

These strengths can give you clues about your work values.

5. Extrovert or Introvert?

If you need to be with others to recharge, then you may be an **extrovert**. Extroverts need to be with people to be at their best. If this describes you, then you would do best at a job where there is a lot of contact with other people.

Those people who need to be alone with their own thoughts to recharge are probably **introverts**. Introverts do their best work when they can have time to themselves to create, to deal with facts, figures or ideas.

6. Is your dream job really a possibility?

Maybe your "dream job" is readily available to you. Even if it is not, try to find jobs that are available to you which could give you some of the same enjoyment and where you could make a contribution.





Today's Job Market in Maine

Understanding how today's job market is different from when you first entered the workforce can help prepare you to make the right decisions during your job search.

As with many Mainers, when you began working or when you observed what your parents and grandparents did for work, most jobs were based on an industrial model of working. In other words, most jobs centered around making something for a living; shoes, textiles or paper for example.

In the past, most workers did not have to make decisions at work. They did not have to work as part of a team or be creative at work.

In the past, most workers were skilled at doing just one thing. Most workers did not perform a variety of tasks on the job. **Now the world of work has changed.**

Even if a job requires you to make a product, there might be additional tasks that need to be performed. You may: work as a team member, be responsible for the quality of a product, or provide customer service. Success on the job requires a wide variety of skills.

As manufacturing plants or mills have closed, and towns have evolved, workers are finding that they may need to travel further from home to find jobs.

Many jobs in Maine today consist of work in the service industry or in retail trade, rather than in manufacturing industries.



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the guide to find specific ways
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Labor Market Information

You may not have looked for work in many years, or you may be seeking your first full-time job. In either case you need to know what to expect.



There are many resources to find information about which jobs are stable and growing and which ones are declining. You can also find out what to expect for salary ranges in different occupations and which employers hire people for the job you are seeking. The CareerCenter Information Center has all that information and more available to you in many different formats.

Online Resources

Maine Department of Labor's Center for Workforce Research and Information (CWRI)

www.maine.gov/labor/lmis

CWRI gives job seekers the power to make important career decisions based on up-to-date labor market information. This website provides job seeker information such as what jobs are in demand, what skills are involved, how much positions pay, labor market trends, and employment projections.

Maine Employment Info Guide

On the CWRI site, click on “Individuals/Job Seekers” under “Maine Employment Info Guide.” Here you can research specific occupations, learn about what career best suits you and also explore the current job market where you want to work in Maine. The Job Market Explorer can help you analyze occupations in a Maine area based on criteria you select.



Informational Interviews

Informational interviews are an opportunity to find out more about an occupation or specific job that you are considering. It should be part of your information gathering process.

These interviews allow you to “hear it straight from the horse’s mouth” from people who actually work in a job or industry of interest. Informational interviews can help you to become more confident in the choice you make. It will also reduce the risk of making a decision that you are unhappy with later. You can interview with:

- a worker who is doing a job you are considering
- a manager that can tell you more about a business or industry
- someone in human resources that knows if an industry is stable or growing in your area

To identify employers and workers to interview, contact your personal network.

Relatives, friends, neighbors, co-workers, classmates and other acquaintances can provide names of people who work in your field of interest. Other people use sources such as the Internet or yellow pages and make “cold calls” to places of interest. “Cold Calling” is a term that describes talking to people you don’t have a personal contact with.

It is a good idea to interview several people so you get different viewpoints.

Remember that an individual will talk about his or her own experience. One worker’s experience may not be typical of other workers.

Always have copies of your résumé and calling or business cards to leave if the person asks for them.

You can ask at the end of the interview if you may leave a calling card and a résumé. However, never ask for a job interview or a job during an informational interview. If you do this, people might think you are a sneaky or dishonest person. You will probably not be offered a job if one becomes available.

When the interview is completed, thank the person for his or her time.

It is also a good idea to send a thank-you note either by postal mail or e-mail.

Tips for Success

Examples of questions you can ask at an informational interview:

- At what job would I start to obtain a position like yours?
- What is a typical day like on this job? What tasks do you do routinely? What tasks do you do only once in a while?
- What does the job mainly involve? Do you work with things? People? Data? Ideas?
- What are the requirements for entry into this job? Experience? Education? Skills? Licenses or credentials? Physical demands? Personal characteristics?
- What are the working conditions like at your job (in your company)? Work alone or as a team member? Indoors or outside? Type of supervision?
- What are the advantages of this job? What are the disadvantages?
- How do people earn promotions in this job (with your company)?
- What are the future prospects with this company? In this industry?

What Employers Are Looking For

The State of Maine recognizes how work is changing.

A Task Force on Essential Work Competencies was formed to help guide workers through these changes. People in workforce development and leaders of Maine businesses worked together to establish a list of essential work competencies. These are the **skills and abilities employers seek when they hire new employees or promote successful workers.**

1. Self-Esteem

Belief in one's own self-worth and abilities.

2. Motivation to Achieve

The desire to improve performance by competing against increasingly higher standards of excellence.

3. Basic Skills

Reading, writing, computation, listening, speaking and computer literacy essential for successful performance as lifelong learners in the workplace.

4. Technical Knowledge and Skills for Specific Occupation

Knowledge, skills & abilities necessary to perform a job.

5. Thinking Skills:

- **Problem-posing** – choosing how to view a problem
- **Problem-solving** – ability to resolve known problems
- **Decision-making** – ability to choose a best response
- **Analytical thinking** – analysis and logical reasoning
- **Creative thinking** – ability to create novel ideas or products

6. Learning Skills

Assessing one's own learning needs, understanding one's own learning styles, using appropriate techniques for learning.

7. Interpersonal Skills:

- **Interpersonal understanding** – hearing and understanding others' spoken, unspoken or partly expressed thoughts, feelings or concerns.
- **Teamwork** – working cooperatively with others to achieve a common goal.
- **Negotiating** – overcoming disagreements by compromising with, accommodating or collaborating with others.

8. Organizational Awareness Skills:

- **Assessment of organizational cultures** – recognizing and assessing the characteristics of an organization's culture, including formal and informal power structures.
- **Presentation of appropriate self** – developing and presenting an image of one's self which is consistent with the organization's requirements for success, including personal appearance and use of appropriate language for the corporate culture.
- **Networking** – developing and maintaining a network of contacts with people who may be able to provide information, assistance, or support for work-related goals.

Changes in Recruitment and Hiring

Changes in technology have led to changes in the way employers recruit, evaluate and select job candidates.

Online job boards

The days of long lists of “want ads” in the local newspaper are over. This isn’t because there aren’t any job openings, it is merely a reflection on the new services local newspapers are offering and new ways employers are recruiting. These days, there are several online job posting sites that employers in Maine are using, including some that are connected to newspaper companies. It is important to understand, however, that only a small percentage of job openings are even posted. Refer to the section “Where to Look for Job Opportunities” for ideas on where to begin your search.

Résumés

Once you do find a position you are interested in, the process for applying may have changed since the last time you looked for work. Employers are requiring the use of résumés in more job openings these days. And, your résumé may be “looked at” by a computer before it even reaches the hands of the human resources staff person.

E-mail

Employers are also using e-mail as a means to reach out to job applicants, both for application or résumé submission, and to set up interviews.

Social Networking

The explosion of social networking sites in the last few years provides employers with new, innovative, and inexpensive ways to recruit for positions. It also provides a way for job seekers to expand their job search.





Beginning Your Job Search

With so many things to think about, starting your search can be a little overwhelming. Knowing what you need and where to look, can help keep you ready and organized.



If you are unsure of where to start, **you may consider attending a workshop at your local CareerCenter**. They offer workshops and classes on a variety of topics including networking, job search techniques, résumé writing, and more. You can find a list of workshops at:

www.mainecareercenter.com/employment/workshops

If you don't have Internet access, call the CareerCenter central hotline to find a CareerCenter near you:

1-888-457-8883

Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

TTY users call Maine Relay 711



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Job Search Tools – Checklist

Computer access



These days **computer access is a must** when you are looking for a job. If you do not own a computer, you may consider asking a friend or family member to let you use theirs. **All full-service Maine CareerCenters are equipped with a computer lab that is available for you to use for job search purposes.** These computers have access to the Internet and software to help you prepare a résumé. You can also find public computer labs available at many local libraries.

If you are uncomfortable with the computer or need to brush up on your skills, some CareerCenters offer workshops. You may also find classes through your local public library or adult education program.

An e-mail account

Though you may not need an e-mail address to search for jobs online, you could miss out on opportunities if you do not have an e-mail address to receive job match notifications. **Many job boards, including Maine's Job Bank, allow you to set up searches so that you get an e-mail any time a job matching your skills is posted.** Some employers may also require you to e-mail a résumé or application to them. They may even set up an interview with you through e-mail instead of a phone call.

If you do not already have an e-mail account, you can create a free account with may providers such as: www.hotmail.com, www.yahoo.com or www.google.com.

If you have a personal e-mail account with an address that does not present you in a professional way, consider creating another account you will use for job search only.

Make sure you check your account frequently while you are searching for a job.

Tips for Success

E-mail etiquette

- Use a meaningful subject (position title, application, name)
- Do not attach unnecessary files
- Avoid e-mail or texting 'shorthand,' i.e. "can u plz send info re: careers?"
- Do not type in ALL CAPITALS; run a spell-check before sending
- Remember, you are making an impression and there is no such thing as private e-mail
- Make sure your address is professional (snookems@yahoo.com or partyguy@hotmail.com, may not project the image you'd like)
- Your first name or initial and last name (or some combination thereof) is usually a good choice
- Reply to all business contacts and potential employers, even if you are not interested in that specific job. They may have something or know of someone who has something more suited to your interests in the future.



USB flash drive

If you need to use public computers to create a résumé, you will also need something to save your files on. “Floppy disks” are obsolete. CD-ROMs are not practical for re-use, especially on any computer other than your own. USB flash drives are often used for the same purposes for which floppy disks or CD-ROMs were used in the past. They are smaller, faster, have thousands of times more capacity, and are more durable and reliable. The drive plugs into any USB port, usually found on today’s computers.



USB flash drives are inexpensive. You can find smaller capacity drives for only a few dollars. When purchasing one of these drives for saving résumé files, and if cost is an issue, look for the smallest capacity available (such as 1GB vs. 8GB). You do not need much storage capacity for these documents. You can find USB flash drives at discount, office supply and electronics stores.



Phone and voice mail/answering machine

It is critical to have a way for potential employers to reach you by phone. It does not matter if it is a home phone or a cell phone. Either one should be equipped with voice mail or an answering machine so a potential employer can leave you a message. Be aware of what your out-going message might say about you. Make sure that the out-going message has a pleasant and professional tone and statement. Finally, be prompt when returning calls to potential employers.



Appointment book or calendar

Use an appointment book or calender to keep track of appointments, telephone calls and plans for follow-up. Having a section that allows for note taking and keeping track of telephone numbers and e-mail addresses is convenient. Use the appointment book to keep track of when you mailed letters, résumés, and thank-you notes. You can also use this book for writing out questions you'd like to ask in an interview and also record answers to questions you had in interviews.



Calling card or business card

Having a calling card (or business card if you are employed) will make it easier for a prospective employer to remember you and reach you when a vacancy occurs. It can also make a professional impression. The card should contain your name and address, telephone number and e-mail address.

Your card should look professional. Quality business card paper can be purchased at any business supply store or office supply section of a large discount store. Many computer programs have a template for business cards. Cards can also be ordered online for free or at reasonable prices.

Standard application and/or résumé

Some employers may require one or the other to apply for a specific job. Other employers may require both. Filling out a standard application and keeping it with you for reference will be helpful when it is time to fill out an employer's form. It can also help you organize your employment history in preparation for creating a résumé. **Since both the application and résumé are so vital in a job search, you can find much more detailed information in this guide's "Applications, Résumés, Cover Letters and References" section.**



The CareerCenter offers workshops on résumé writing. To find out about workshops available in your area, visit: www.mainecareercenter.com/employment/workshops.

List of references

Compile a list of people you can use as references. This should be done before you get to the interview stage of your job search, so that you are ready to supply a potential employer with it upon request.

The people you ask to be your references should be able to speak from firsthand knowledge about the skills, abilities and personal qualities that would make you successful in the job for which you are applying. **More detailed information on references can be found in the "Applications, Résumés, Cover Letters and References" section of this guide.**

Where to Look for Job Opportunities

There are many different places to look for jobs. **Don't limit yourself** to one or two. A thorough job search encompasses a combination of many different sources. Following are some suggestions.

The Internet



Maine's Job Bank - www.mainecareercenter.com

Maine's Job Bank is sponsored by the Maine Department of Labor (MDOL). It is part of the U.S. Department of Labor's CareerOneStop network, a public workforce system funded with federal dollars. Jobs posted in Maine's Job Bank go through an MDOL screening process. This means that each job posting must be for a bona fide immediate opening for a legitimate employer. No "business opportunities" are listed. Benefits to using Maine's Job Bank include:

- Accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Search for job openings based upon your individual qualifications
- Get matched with employers looking for your skills
- Receive automatic e-mail notifications when jobs that match your qualifications and preferences are posted
- Post a résumé that can be sent to employers

Nationwide job banks

Extend your job search nationwide.

- **JOBcentral** – www.jobcentral.com
Lists jobs posted on state job banks, including Maine's Job Bank
- **America's Job Exchange** – www.americasjobexchange.com

Other online job boards

There are many privately owned job boards on the Internet. You can expand to a nationwide search in countless occupations or narrow your search with a job board that lists only jobs in a certain region or occupation. Many employers will also list job openings on their own company website. The

CareerCenter has compiled a list of job boards that might be helpful to you in your job search. To access that list go to: www.mainecareercenter.com/employment/search



Tips for Success

Be wary of work-at-home and other job scams

Ads for work-at-home opportunities may appeal to you. But before you send in any money in response to an offer, check it out. Fraudulent promoters use the classifieds and the Internet to tout all kinds of work-at-home offers, from medical billing and envelope stuffing to assembly and craft work. Too often, these ads make promises about earnings, merchandise, or marketability that sound great, but aren't truthful. The result: consumers can get ripped off.

Avoid listings that:

- promise high income for part-time hours
- claim to provide you with leads or lists of job opportunities
- charge to hire you
- require you to purchase start-up kits or training materials
- pay based on recruitment of others

To file a complaint:

- Federal Trade Commission – www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov
- Better Business Bureau – www.bbb.org

Source:
Federal Trade Commission – www.ftc.gov/jobscams

Your personal network

A majority of job openings are never even posted anywhere. The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that about 85% of jobs are filled through networking. Organizations tend to hire people they know or are referred to them by someone they trust. Often by the time a job is listed, the employer already has a list of referrals. They may not even consider the applicants they get through job postings.

One of the best ways to break in to this “hidden” market is through an effective network. Family members, friends, former co-workers, classmates, neighbors and community members are usually part of your primary network. (But don’t stop there! Move into your secondary network – friends of friends, etc.) **Tell everyone in your network the type of job you are looking for.** It is often better to describe which skills you want to use rather than giving a job title. This will give your network more options to search. Give them copies of your résumé and ask them where you might go looking for jobs. You will also want to follow up with your network on a regular basis. Let them know how your job search is going. Remember, when you network, you have many people helping you with your job search.

Newspapers

Although a small percentage of jobs are ever listed in the classified section of the **local newspaper** it is still a good source. Do not overlook it.

Employment Times is a biweekly help-wanted publication focusing on the Augusta, Bangor, Lewiston/Auburn and Portland areas of Maine and the Concord, Dover, Nashua, Manchester and Portsmouth areas of New Hampshire. It is a free publication that is available at such locations as banks, supermarkets, gas stations, pharmacies, colleges and universities, street boxes and more. *Employment Times* job listings can also be found online at: www.myjobwave.com.

Job fairs

Job fairs are a way to meet in person with employers who have current job openings. You can check out a multiple job openings with a variety of employers all at once without paying an entrance fee. Some job fairs focus on one industry, while others are centered around a specific community or region. Watch for job fair ads in your local newspaper.



Local CareerCenters sometimes host “mini job fairs” where one employer (or more) is set up for open recruiting. The CareerCenter website has a list of upcoming mini job fairs as well as community and industry fairs at: www.mainecareercenter.com/employment/job-fairs.

Tips for Success

What to bring with you to a job fair:

- **A copy of your completed standard application** to use as a reference for filling out employer applications
- **Several copies of your most current résumé** to leave with employers
- **Your business card or calling card**
- **Your “Elevator Pitch”**

[More detailed information on the above items can be found in the “Applications, Résumés, Cover Letters and References” section of this guide.]

Social media

The social media revolution is based on the concept of networking. If you are looking for a job today and you have not yet propelled yourself into the world of social media, now is the time to open your mind and dive in. You can find a wealth of information on how to look for a job using this method just by **typing “using social media to find a job” into an Internet search.**

Many employers, job boards, newspapers, and staffing agencies are using social media to highlight open positions. By linking in with them, you will stay on top of more opportunities.

Some of the most popular social media sites used for career networking (and how to use them) are:



Twitter™

Twitter is a real-time information network that connects you to public conversation in small bursts of information called “Tweets.” Each Tweet is limited to 140 characters in length. You can either actively participate in conversations, or just “listen in.” You will need to set up a free account to stay connected. Once you set up an account:

- Start following recruiters and job boards. You can find them by looking for the Twitter icon on their website or the words “Follow us on Twitter.” Click on the link that will take you to their page. On their Twitter page, click on the button that says, “+ Follow.”
- Search for websites of employers you want to work for. Follow the same steps as above if they have a Twitter account.
- Look at who the recruiters, job boards and employers are following and who is following them. You may want to join in.
- Encourage people in your personal network to follow you. Tweet frequently about your skills, what you are looking for, and the status of your job search. (Keep your Tweets professional!)



Facebook®

Facebook is a portal to a much more social (friendship) kind of networking. It emphasizes profiles and people, while Twitter emphasizes the actual content. In addition to sharing thoughts and information, Facebook allows users to share photos, videos, personal interests, etc. It can be a very useful tool in your job search.

- Find recruiters and job board pages in the same manner as Twitter. Look for the Facebook icon on their website or the words “Like us on Facebook.” On their Facebook page, click on the thumbs up button that says “Like.”
- Find employers that you want to work for and “Like” them.
- Update your status frequently with information about your job search. One of your “friends” might have a lead for you.



LinkedIn®

LinkedIn is all about professional networking. This is a place to connect with current or former colleagues, people in similar industries or professions, and employers and recruiters looking to fill positions. Employers and recruiters often look for candidates that they have connections with on LinkedIn and check the profiles of applicants they are considering.

- Set up a professional profile that is based on your résumé. You can create your profile by uploading your résumé.
- Share your profile and “Make Connections” with people you already know on a professional or personal basis.
- Ask for recommendations or endorsements from people that worked with you in certain situations.
- Join groups with people of similar professions and industries, as well as your alma mater.
- Give potential employers a link to your profile.
- You can also follow companies, find out information on them, and see who works there. You may find that you have connections in common, which can help you get your foot in the door.



YouTube®

YouTube is a video sharing website on which users can upload and share videos.

To make yourself standout from the crowd, you can create a video résumé and link to it from your other social media.

Tips for Success

Do's and Don'ts of social media while searching for a job

Hiring managers and school admissions officers sometimes do “background checks” on applicants using social networks (like Facebook).

Do:

- Review your privacy settings on your accounts
- Think about what you would want a potential employer to find out about you
- Conduct an Internet search on yourself – you might be surprised at what comes up! (Yes, it can pick up your Facebook page.)
- Complete your LinkedIn profile and put a link to it on your résumé
- Keep a professional presence
- Monitor what other people are posting on your page

Don't:

- Post inappropriate content (get rid of those drunk party photos)
- Make derogatory comments about your present or past employer or co-workers
- Use offensive or immature images as your profile picture
- Share “too much information”



Blogs

A blog (from the term web log) is an interactive website or part of a website that provides commentary or news on a particular subject. Readers usually have the ability to comment on the entries. Many employers and recruiters have blogs with updates on their activities and job opportunities. Look for icons such as Blogger® on their websites and subscribe. You can also find many job search advice blogs by doing an online search.

Staffing agencies and recruiting services

Recruiting and staffing services can be excellent job search resources. They focus on matching your skills with the job openings of employers or companies, and almost always, the employer pays their fees so there is no cost to you. **Note: Be skeptical of any employment-service firm that charges you first, even if it guarantees refunds.**

Staffing services match workers with short-term or temporary-to-permanent positions. They're sometimes known as contract firms or employment agencies. Many people associate staffing agencies with only temporary work, but the fact is that many times a temporary position can actually lead to a permanent opportunity.

Recruiting services search for qualified candidates for full-time positions. These firms are also called headhunters or executive search firms.



The CareerCenter has compiled a list of these agencies in Maine that might be helpful to you in your job search.

To access that list, go to:

www.mainecareercenter.com/employment/search

Tips for Success

Benefits of working through a staffing service:

- Develop skills and meet financial needs while continuing to look for work
- It may be easier to get a job when you have a job
- You may be able to get more flexible hours or working conditions to accommodate your personal situation
- Gain work experience, obtain training, or increase networking contacts
- You can check out an employer or an occupation before making a commitment to training, a particular career, or a particular employer

Benefits of using a recruiting service:

- Get access to unadvertised opportunities
- The recruiting firm is working to match your skills and long-term goals to a job

Online Resources

Finding other job search information

The Internet is an excellent source for general job hunting ideas and strategies. You can find all kinds of useful information just by typing a phrase such as "how to find a job" or "job search tips" into a search engine such as:

- Google™ – www.google.com
- Yahoo!® – www.yahoo.com
- Bing™ – www.bing.com
- Ask.com ® – www.ask.com

Direct contact with employers

Do some research on employers you would like to work for. You can often find their company's website online. Read up on what the company does and find out if they have positions you would be interested in. Talk to people you know who work there. Even if they are not hiring at the moment, it is still helpful to make contact with them. Down the road, they may consider you for an opening.

Employers often list their job openings on their own website. That may even be the only place they list opportunities.

School placement office

If you are a student, first talk to your placement or guidance office. Employers often list entry-level openings with schools. Even if you are a graduate, you may be able to use the school's resources in your job search.

Government jobs

Federal jobs – www.usajobs.gov

USAJOBS is the official job site of the U.S. Federal Government. It's your one-stop source for Federal job listings and employment information. You can find job descriptions for all open positions and job application forms there. Some agencies have their own personnel offices and fill their own job openings. These jobs will not be listed at USAJOBS. You must apply directly to the U.S. Postal Service, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Central Intelligence Agency and Secret Service if you wish to work for one of these agencies.

Maine State Government jobs – www.maine.gov/statejobs

Applying for most state jobs requires following one of two application processes:

Direct Hire positions are generally advanced professional or highly specialized technical jobs usually having a license or certification requirement. They also include positions involving unskilled and semi-skilled labor, attendant, domestic, or custodial duties.

- Most postings are for specific openings
- The hiring agency manages the recruitment and application process
- Paper applications and résumés are sent to the agency contact person

Questions regarding specific Direct Hire positions should be directed to the hiring agency listed on the website.

Open Competitive positions are filled from employment registers as vacancies in these jobs occur. The Bureau of Human Resources publishes Career Opportunity Bulletins for jobs open to application. These bulletins contain important information about the duties and responsibilities of the job, minimum qualifications required, and the examination process for placement on the employment registers.

- On-line applications are required
- An e-mail address is needed
- You must create an online profile with Bureau of Human Resources at:
www.maine.gov/online/hireme.

Questions regarding the Open Competitive process or general state employment can be directed to the Bureau of Human Resources at 207-624-7761 or TTY users call Maine Relay 711.



Applications, Résumés, Cover Letters and References

Now that you know where to look for job opportunities, it is time to sell yourself.

You need to be able to market your skills effectively to someone who wants to hire you. That is what the information you provide on your application and/or résumé and cover letter should do. The purpose of these tools is to get you in the door and invited to an interview. Once there, you will need to be prepared to supply a list of references to back up the information that you provided to the potential employer.

Tips for Success

How today's Maine employers use your application or résumé

These are statements that real Maine employers have made at the CareerCenter.

"Résumés and applications need to help me see you in the specific job you're applying for."

"Sometimes I scan a résumé in 15 to 20 seconds..."

"I'll know right away whether you follow directions based on how you apply for the job."

"I want to see work history/career progression."



**Look for this icon throughout
the guide to find specific ways
that the CareerCenter can help
you with your job search!**

Applications

Many employers require job applicants to complete an application. Some may ask for a résumé. Other employers may require both. **Filling out a standard application and keeping it with you for reference** will be helpful when it is time to fill out an employer's form. It can also help you organize your employment history in preparation for creating a résumé.

Although application forms do not offer the same flexibility as a résumé, you can still find ways to highlight your best qualifications. For example, you can use strong action verbs to describe your skills and duties. If you do not have paid experience, you can give job titles to your volunteer work or list relevant academic experience, substituting "student" for job titles.

Application Do's

Make a good first impression

When you pick up an application, don't miss an opportunity to make a good first impression. Dress as you would for the job.

Make copies

Make a copy of the blank application. Use one copy as a rough draft and the other as the final product. Then make a copy of your final completed application and keep it for future reference.

Be accurate

Even the smallest error might make you ineligible for a job. Incorrect information on an application might mean you could be fired if you get a job and a background check is performed to verify your information. Be sure you have the right dates, names and job titles for all your work history. Some employers will not consider an applicant if the application submitted is not neat, complete and accurate.

Read the directions carefully

Read the entire application before you begin. Put information in the correct spaces.

Be specific

Indicate the type of work you are applying for. "Anything" does not let the employer know what you can do or the type of work you should be considered for.

Print neatly

Application Don'ts

Misrepresent yourself

Never lie about having been fired or anything else on your application. If you don't want to spell out certain details on the application, write "will discuss in interview" on the application.

Leave blanks

Write N/A for not applicable if you have no response for a question.

Tips for Success

Paper applications in the computer age

- Your application and résumé might be scanned and read first by a computer
- Think like a computer, and write what it wants to read
- Use keywords and phrases directly from the job posting

Online applications

Today many employers have done away with paper applications and now use only online applications. You may be able to fill out an application on your home computer at the company's website. If you walk into an employer such as a large retailer and ask for an application, they may point you to a computer terminal. You need to be ready with all of your information in hand, so you can fill out the application accurately.

- **Fill out a standard paper application** (such as the one on the following pages) and bring it with you for reference.
- If you are filling out an application from your home computer, you may want to **have your résumé open in a word processing program so that you can copy and paste text from it**.
- **Give yourself plenty of time to complete the application.** Many online applications can be time consuming. Although some allow you to save and go back to finish later, this is not always the case.
- **Be sure to fill in all of the boxes for required information.** Many times these items will be marked with an asterisk (*), a different color or other symbol. If you do not fill in these boxes, you will not be able to proceed to the next step.
- **Proofread each page before you click on the next button.** You may not be able to go back and correct mistakes after that point.
- If possible, **save the application often.** If something goes wrong with your computer or Internet connection, you don't want to have to start over.
- Be prepared for questions, tests and rating scales within the application.
- You may have the option to **upload a résumé.** This may be optional, but doing so gives the employer more information about you, and gives you more opportunity to sell yourself.
- **Read all of the fine print** before clicking on the submit button. By clicking the submit button, you are essentially signing an agreement. You might be agreeing to a credit check or a drug test.
- **Check your e-mail after you submit the application.** Many online application systems will send you an automatically generated e-mail confirming your submission.

Tips for Success

Information you may need

- E-mail address
- Social Security number
- Names, addresses and phone numbers of all of the places you have worked
- Dates that you worked at each job
- Names of your former supervisors or managers
- Names and location of all the schools you attended including high school, college, grad school and any specialized training
- Drivers license number

Sample Standard Application

APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

This generic application is provided by the Maine CareerCenter. This form complies with federal and state laws against discrimination; however, employers using this form should check local ordinances. The Maine Department of Labor and the Maine CareerCenter network are not responsible for the misuse of information provided on this form. Provide all information requested by printing in ink or typing. Use the 'TAB' key to move through the document.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Name (Last)	(First)	(Middle Initial)	Home Telephone () -	
Address (Mailing Address)	(City)	(State)	(Zip)	Other Telephone () -
E-mail Address	Are you legally entitled to work in the U.S.? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			

POSITION

Position or Type of Employment Desired	Will Accept: <input type="checkbox"/> Part-Time <input type="checkbox"/> Full-Time <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary	Shift: <input type="checkbox"/> Day <input type="checkbox"/> Swing <input type="checkbox"/> Graveyard <input type="checkbox"/> Rotating
Are you able to perform the essential functions of the job you are applying for, with or without reasonable accommodation? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Salary Desired	Date Available	

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

High School Graduate Or General Education (GED) Test Passed? Yes No

If no, list the highest grade completed

College, Business School, Military (Most recent first)

Name and Location	Dates Attended Month/Year	Credits Earned		Graduate	Degree & Year	Major or Subject
		Quarterly or Semester Hours	Other (Specify)			
	From			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
	To			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
	From			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
	To			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
	From			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
	To			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		

Occupational License, Certificate or Registration	Number	Where Issued	Expiration Date
Occupational License, Certificate or Registration	Number	Where Issued	Expiration Date
Occupational License, Certificate or Registration	Number	Where Issued	Expiration Date

Languages read, written or spoken fluently other than English

VETERAN INFORMATION (Most recent)

Branch of Service	Date of Entry	Date of Discharge
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SPECIAL SKILLS (List all pertinent skills and equipment that you can operate)

(Maximum 300 characters)

WORK EXPERIENCE (Most Recent First – Include voluntary work and military experience)

Employer	Telephone Number () -	From (Month/Year)
Address		
Job Title	Number Employees Supervised	To (Month/Year)
Specific Duties (Maximum 350 characters)		
Reason For Leaving	May We Contact This Employer? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Employer	Telephone Number () -	From (Month/Year)
Address		
Job Title	Number Employees Supervised	To (Month/Year)
Specific Duties (Maximum 350 characters)		
Reason For Leaving	May We Contact This Employer? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Employer	Telephone Number () -	From (Month/Year)
Address		
Job Title	Number Employees Supervised	To (Month/Year)
Specific Duties (Maximum 350 characters)		
Reason For Leaving	May We Contact This Employer? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Employer	Telephone Number () -	From (Month/Year)
Address		
Job Title	Number Employees Supervised	To (Month/Year)
Specific Duties (Maximum 350 characters)		
Reason For Leaving	May We Contact This Employer? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

I certify the information contained in this application is true, correct, and complete. I understand that, if employed, false statements reported on this application may be considered sufficient cause for dismissal.

Signature of Applicant _____ **Date** _____

Interviewer's Comments:



The Maine Department of Labor provides equal opportunity in employment and programs.
Auxiliary aids and services are available to individuals with disabilities upon request.



Using Action Words to Name Your Skills

Here are some action words that you can use to describe your skills. Use these action words in your skills statements in your résumé or on applications.

Managing	Communicating	Researching	Problem Solving	Reaching a Goal
Administered	Addressed	Analyzed	Devised	Accomplished
Analyzed	Arbitrated	Catalogued	Eliminated	Achieved
Approved	Arranged	Checked	Enhanced	Challenged
Assigned	Corrected	Clarified	Established	Delivered
Conducted	Created	Collected	Gained	Exhibited
Contracted	Developed	Critiqued	Identified	Implemented
Controlled	Directed	Decided	Implemented	Improved
Coordinated	Edited	Defined	Improved	Increased
Delegated	Enlisted	Developed	Increased	Innovated
Directed	Influenced	Diagnosed	Innovated	Instituted
Evaluated	Interpreted	Evaluated	Located	Launched
Executed	Manipulated	Examined	Minimized	Located
Fired	Marketed	Gathered	Observed	Specialized
Headed	Mediated	Identified	Overhauled	Updated
Hired	Motivated	Inspected	Pursued	Validated
Judged	Negotiated	Interpreted	Qualified	Verified
Led	Obtained	Interviewed	Remedied	Financial
Managed	Participated	Investigated	Reorganized	Accounted
Monitored	Persuaded	Isolated	Revamped	Administered
Orchestrated	Read	Organized	Secured	Allocated
Organized	Reasoned	Reviewed	Solved	Analyzed
Oversaw	Recruited	Studied	Streamlined	Appraised
Planned	Represented	Surveyed	Suggested	Audited
Prioritized	Revised	Synthesized	Transformed	Balanced
Produced	Sold	Targeted	Updated	Budgeted
Recognized	Solicited	Validated	Upgraded	Calculated
Recommended	Spoke	Verified		Computed
Reviewed	Summarized	Wrote		Developed
Scheduled	Translated			Kept books
Selected	Transmitted			Recorded
Supervised	Updated			Researched
Troubleshoot	Wrote			Projected
				Purchased

Creating	Teaching	Using Details	Helping	Physical
Acted	Adapted	Applied	Aided	Bent
Assembled	Advised	Arranged	Assisted	Bound
Conceptualized	Briefed	Classified	Attended	Built
Created	Clarified	Collated	Cared for	Cut
Designed	Coached	Collected	Contributed	Drove
Directed	Communicated	Compared	Directed	Fed
Empathized	Coordinated	Compiled	Empathized	Installed
Fashioned	Decided	Copied	Guided	Lifted
Generated	Developed	Dispatched	Listened	Moved
Imagined	Demonstrated	Executed	Perceived	Operated
Integrated	Enabled	Filed	Referred	Pulled
Invented	Encouraged	Inspected	Related	Set up
Memorized	Enlightened	Joined	Rendered	Shipped
Named	Explained	Maintained	Spoke	Tended
Orchestrated	Facilitated	Memorized	Supported	Used
Originated	Guided	Merged	Understood	Utilized
Painted	Informed	Met deadlines		
Perceived	Initiated	Minimized		
Performed	Instructed	Organized		
Planned	Presented	Processed		
Played	Set Goals	Quantified		
Prepared	Stimulated	Reconciled		
Shaped	Trained	Reorganized		
Synthesized	Valued	Retrieved		
Visualized		Scheduled		
Wrote		Tabulated		

Samples of Skills Statements

- **Organized** work team to get Widget Project done on time and under budget
- **Diagnosed and corrected** problems with small engines
- **Operated** widget attachment machine
- **Cared for** 10 acute care patients
- **Maintained and balanced** daily accounts receivable

Tips for Success

Formula for developing a Skills Statement

1. Name your skill and relate that skill to your worker preference with data, people or things.
2. Give an example of how you have demonstrated that skill.
3. Give the outcome or result you achieved such as time or money saved.

Résumés

You need to be able to market your skills effectively to someone who wants to hire you. A potential employer needs to “see you in the job.” **Hiring managers may spend only a few seconds scanning your résumé to determine if it should go into the qualified candidate pile or if it should be weeded out.** This makes it imperative that you choose the most appropriate résumé format to highlight your skills effectively.



The CareerCenter offers workshops on résumé writing. To find out about workshops available in your area, visit: www.mainecareercenter.com/employment/workshops.

Each full-service CareerCenter is also equipped with a computer lab and software such as Microsoft Word® and WinWay® Résumé Deluxe that you may use to create a résumé.



Maine's Job Bank includes a résumé building tool. You will be able to create a résumé from scratch or upload an existing résumé and use the tool to help enhance the content. The résumé tool will:

- Prompt you with yes or no answers to questions based on the provided position title and employer
- Create bulleted skill and duty descriptions instead of requiring you to write your own
- Provide a choice of résumé formats (chronological or functional)
- Allow you to review and edit the created résumé for accuracy and customization
- Save the resultant résumé in a variety of formats
- Match you with job opportunities posted in Maine's Job Bank

The most common types of résumés

There are three main résumé formats. Each is defined by the way it organizes your experience.

- **Chronological** résumés present information in a time line approach. This format is a good choice for people with steady work histories or previous jobs that relate closely to their career objective. But because this format emphasizes dates and job titles, it is often not the best format for career changers or new entrants to the work force.
- **Functional** résumés organize your experience around skills rather than job titles. This format is ideal for students who have some work history, but not in positions that relate directly to the job they want. Be aware however, that many employers are not familiar with this format.
- **Combination** résumés highlight your skills and experiences. This format combines the best of chronological and functional formats.

Tips for Success

An effective résumé is:

- one, but not more than two pages
- an advertisement of your professional skills
- not your life history

Advantages and disadvantages of commonly used résumé formats

Résumé Format	Advantages	Disadvantages	Best Used By
Chronological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Widely-used format Logical flow, easy to read Showcases growth in skills and responsibility Shows promotions and impressive titles Shows company loyalty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasizes gaps in employment and/or frequent job changes Emphasizes lack of related experience Points out demotions and career set-backs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those with uninterrupted work record Those with experience which relates directly to the position applied for
Functional <i>[Use with Caution!]</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasizes skills rather than employment Organizes a variety of experience (paid and unpaid work, other activities) Disguises gaps in work record or a series of short-term jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Viewed with suspicion by employers due to lack of information about specific employers and dates De-emphasizes growth/job titles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those with no previous employment Those with gaps in employment Frequent job changers Those who have developed skills from other than documented employment
Combination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlights most relevant skills/accomplishments De-emphasizes employment history in less relevant jobs Combines skills developed in a variety of jobs or other activities Minimizes drawbacks such as employment gaps and absence of directly-related experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confusing if not well-organized Requires more effort and creativity to prepare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career changers or those in transition Those re-entering the job market after an absence Those who have grown in skills and responsibility Those pursuing the same or similar work as they've had in the past
Targeted			<p>When applying for a professional position, it is recommended that each résumé you submit to potential employers be written to show how you can fulfill that specific employer's needs. Targeting your résumé to each employer can be time consuming, but will be more impressive to the employer, shows you've researched the company/position, and increases your chances of being asked for an interview.</p>

Résumé Content

The following are general guidelines for writing a **combination résumé**. The included sections and headings will vary for chronological and functional résumés.

Your résumé should contain the following sections:

Contact Information which includes:

- your name – full legal name
- your address
- phone number – choose the best number where you can be reached, either home phone, cell phone, or include both
- e-mail address
- personal website address (if appropriate)

Your Personal Branding Statement

This is not a job title, and replaces the “objective” that has traditionally been used. It is a description of who you are and what unique benefit you bring to a particular employer. It is all about marketing yourself in a way that will get you noticed. You need to grab the attention of the hiring manager and interest them enough to read on. Edit and customize your branding statement for different positions, employers and industries. **Also see “Tips for Success: Develop an Elevator Pitch” in the Interview Preparation section of this guide.** Put this branding statement immediately after your contact information. Following is an example of a personal branding statement:

Self-motivated office professional with over ten years experience in human resources and benefits administration processes. Detail-oriented with strong organization and communication skills.

Highlights of Skills and Accomplishments

This is list of four to six bulleted sentences that provide an overview of your skills, experience and accomplishments throughout your career. It can be particularly effective for applicants with extensive or varied experience because it prevents the important facts from being lost in the details of the job descriptions that will be found below.

Tips for Success

When describing your job duties, **emphasize your results instead of responsibilities, and performance rather than qualities.** It is not enough, for example, to claim that you are organized; you must use your experience to prove it.

Use specific accomplishments to give your experience impact. Note any improvements you made, any time or money you saved, and any problems you solved.

Fill your résumé with keywords that you would find in job listings for your career. Your résumé might be read first by a computer. So learn to think like a computer, and write what it wants to read.

Use a thesaurus or the action words list in this guide if you find you are repeating the same word too many times.

Experience

Included in this section is your professional employment history. It should contain a list of **relevant work, military and volunteer experience**. Begin with your most recent experience and include the following information:

- name and location of the employer or organization
- years you worked there
- title of your job
- duties you performed and results you achieved. Use action verbs, all in the same tense, to describe each duty.

Education and Training

List all relevant training, certifications and education. Start with the most recent and work backward. For each school you have attended, list:

- the school's name and location
- diploma, certificate or degree earned
- year of completion
- field of study
- honors received

If you have not yet completed one of your degrees, use the word “expected” before your graduation date. If you do not know when you will graduate, add “in progress” after the name of the unfinished degree.

The education section is especially important for recent graduates. Include your overall grade point average only if it helps your case. You might also consider listing four to eight courses related to a particular occupation to show a connection between education and work.

Other Sections

You may also consider adding sections that lists **Professional Affiliations, Community Involvement, Interests, Student Activities** or your fluency in **Foreign Languages**. If you are seeking positions that would require specific **Computer Programming or Software** skills, those should be listed in their own section as well.

Tips for Success

When using a résumé creation tool such as WinWay® Résumé Deluxe, be aware of how you are saving it for future use.

- If you save it in the WinWay file format, you will only be able to open the file on a computer that has the program on it.
- If you want to be able to open it on a computer that does not have WinWay, you must EXPORT it to another format such as Microsoft Word®. In this format, you will be able to open it in Word and edit it.
- If you want to be able to open it, but don't need to edit the file, you can EXPORT it as an Adobe® PDF file. This is also a good format to send to employers, as the content will be “locked” in place.

What not to include on your résumé

Some information does not belong on a résumé. Do not disclose:

- date of birth
- social security number
- disabilities
- marital or family status
- ethnicity

Also leave out the statement, “References available upon request.”

Objective Statement

Unless your objective is very specific to a particular job opportunity, leave out the objective statement and **use a personal branding statement instead**. In general, objective statements tend to be either too limiting or too vague. Traditional objective statements tend to describe what you want, rather than what you can offer to an employer. An effective personal branding statement allows the potential employer “to see you in the position,” and enables you to sell yourself into a career that is related to your personal objective.

Tips for Success

Example of an objective that is too limiting:

“A position as Director of Marketing creating, developing and implementing revenue-producing marketing campaigns.”

This objective limits the individual to a position of that title. An employer may be looking for someone to fill a position that requires some of the same skills as a Director of Marketing, but may not use that title. You should describe the skills you possess as someone qualified to be in that position instead.

Example of an objective that is too vague:

“A position in an industry-leading company that will give me the opportunity to advance to my full potential.”

Who doesn’t want to work for an industry-leading company? And who doesn’t want to advance to their full potential? You must state why you are a match for what a potential employer is looking for.

Example of an objective that is specific to a particular job opportunity:

“An internship as a child care specialist for the County Job and Family Services Agency.”

While a personal branding statement would be more effective, this is an acceptable objective statement because it tells the employer exactly what you are looking for and refers to a specific job opportunity.

Your résumé's appearance

Length

A long résumé is difficult for a reviewer to read and remember. It may get ignored if an employer receives a large volume of résumés.

- An effective résumé is one or not more than two pages long.
- If you have worked in a limited number of positions, or if you are a student or recent graduate, keep your résumé to one page.
- If you have more extensive experience, limit your résumé to two pages.
- Eliminate anything that does not help prove that you are qualified for the job you are applying for.

Layout

You will create a good impression if your résumé is attractive and easy to read.

- Use a word processing program such as Microsoft Word® or a résumé building program such as WinWay® Résumé Deluxe, both of which are available for your use at the CareerCenter.
- Use a simple, professional-looking font
- Make your résumé easy to read by using 12-point font size.
- One-inch margins around the page and blank lines between sections will make information easier to see.



[Note: It is acceptable to vary from these two rules slightly, if it means avoiding a second or third page that contains only a few lines of text.]

- Use boldface, large type, capital letters, centering or horizontal lines to make headings stand out on the page.
- Bullets can draw attention to key accomplishments and descriptions.
- Maintain a consistent style from beginning to end – for example, if your education heading is bold and centered, every heading should be bold and centered.
- Print your résumé on high quality paper, using a quality printer. *If you don't have access to a printer, check with your local CareerCenter about printing your résumé there.*



Language

- When describing jobs, use action statements not sentences. Use strong verbs, in a consistent tense, to begin each statement. **See the section titled “Using Action Word to Name Your Skills” in this guide for a list of verbs.**
- Use keywords and phrases from the job posting.
- Avoid the use of inappropriate jargon or abbreviations.
- Double check for errors in spelling, grammar or punctuation. Don't rely solely on your software's spell check. Have someone else proofread.

Save it

If you are using your home computer, you can save this file on your hard drive. If you are using a public computer, you must save this file on a portable drive or disk such as a USB flash drive.

Sample Chronological Résumé

Bea Positive

789 Main Street • Anytown, ME 12345 • 207-555-1234 • b.positive@email.com

To find out which résumé style best fits your situation, refer to the chart "Advantages and disadvantages of commonly used résumé formats" in this guide.

Superb customer service skills honed by 15 years of retail experience in developing and maintaining customer loyalty. Highly organized, keeping all records with accuracy and thoroughness.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Costless, Small Town, ME

CASHIER/CUSTOMER SERVICE/MEMBERSHIP/MARKETING

June 2001 – Present

- Controlled cash flow while ringing out customers. Kept lines of shoppers moving smoothly with courtesy and humor. Received and directed patrons at the door.
- Worked with security and loss-prevention issues.
- Developed customer relationships for long-term loyalty. Known for treating shoppers like family.
- Cared for all client concerns: signed up customers for Costless and American Express charge cards; communicated with main office; updated membership accounts; offered general information and product availability by telephone and in person.
- Sold memberships to businesses and individuals in local-area towns. Upgraded current members to Executive Membership resulting in increased cash flow and customer loyalty.

PetPals, Central Area, ME

JUNIOR MANAGER ON DUTY

Feb. 1998 – June 2001

- Responsible for all aspects of opening and closing facility, including arming/disarming security system, booting up computers, communicating with corporate office, counting store safe and register cash, and setting up the store.
- Created computer reports on sales, returns, and loss prevention for the corporate office.
- Motivated employees, developed customers, and oversaw animal care from ordering to sale.

Burger House, South of the Border, ME

JUNIOR MANAGER/SHIFT LEADER

Oct. 1996 – Feb. 1998

- Opened kitchen and registers for breakfast. Observed strict food-service regulations. Met temperature and sanitizing standards.
- Supervised and motivated crew. Built solid relationships with patrons.

HealthDeli, Hometown, ME

CASHIER

June 1994 – Oct. 1996

- Operated registers. Assisted in deli; performed light stock work.
- Became knowledgeable about vitamins/supplements to advise shoppers. Worked to create trust with customers for lasting relationships.

Entrepreneurial Businesses, Hometown, ME

HOUSE CLEANING SERVICE

OFFICE TEMPORARY WORK

EDUCATION

Associate of Science Degree in Administrative Assistant – Maine City College

June 1996

COMPUTER SOFTWARE SKILLS

Microsoft Word • Microsoft Excel • Microsoft Access • Microsoft Outlook • Microsoft PowerPoint

Sample Functional Résumé

Lewis Layne

123 Eastern Court, Coastal City, Maine 12345

207-123-4567 • lewis@email.com

To find out which résumé style best fits your situation, refer to the chart "Advantages and disadvantages of commonly used résumé formats" in this guide.

SUPERVISING FAMILY WORKER COORDINATOR

Case Management • Investigations • Employment • Training • Counseling • Evaluation Assessment
Field Visits • Reporting • Community Outreach

Eight successful years providing quality services and support to youth and adults in the social services and education fields. Outstanding leadership, problem-solving, and organizational abilities with extensive experience in employment counseling, case management, supervision, and training. Dedicated to improving the quality of life for all individuals and ensuring the proper resources and services are provided at all levels and stages in their development.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

CASE MANAGEMENT/TRAINING/COUNSELING

- Managed a caseload of 50+ clients in child placement, stability, training, and employment.
- Referred clients to appropriate employment assignments and training programs after reviewing their history and background.
- Evaluated and monitored client's progress toward employment and placement.
- Conducted various types of investigations including abuse, neglect, in-home supervision, residential placement, and foster care.
- Counseled clients on school issues, finances, health, and family relationships.
- Assessed the educational and training needs of clients.
- Prepared weekly progress reports and made recommendations for placement and special services.
- Conducted periodic field visits to ensure the safety of clients and children.
- Visited schools, clinics, hospitals, government agencies, and family members to gather data required to recommend court or social services actions.

PROFESSIONAL HISTORY

Family Services Specialist, Company Z, City, State	Jan. 2008 -Oct. 2010
Employment Specialist, County DOED, City, State	April 2003 - Dec. 2007
Early Childhood Teacher, Kindercare, City, State	June 2000 - March 2003
Elementary Teacher, Kindercare, City, State	August 1995 - May 2000
Elementary Teacher, Kiddie Academy, City, State	August 1990 - June 1995

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

YourTown YMCA Homeless Shelter

Vacation Bible School Teacher

A's Crossing Women and Children Shelter

TECHNOLOGY SKILLS

Word, Excel, Outlook, Web-based programs, Internet

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, Blossom City College (Dean's List)

May 1990

Sample Combination Résumé

Robert Jobseeker

www.websiteaddress.com
email@jobseeker.net

To find out which résumé style best fits your situation, refer to the chart "Advantages and disadvantages of commonly used résumé formats" in this guide.

987 Smith Avenue
Big City, Maine 12345
207-123-4567

REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONAL

Top-producing, accomplished, enthusiastic realtor with a distinguished career of 20+ years selling real estate. Goal-oriented and results-driven with ability to utilize cutting-edge technologies in generating new markets. Strong decision maker with a proactive management style. Record of consistent achievement, proven P&L management skills, personal commitment, and positive corporate growth. Able to execute multiple projects simultaneously, communicate ideas to others, and bring functional groups together to achieve a common goal. Integrity is crucial to client care, and commitment to clients is to exceed their expectations.

HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Closed more than 1,000 transactions.
- Served three years on the North Land Association of Realtors Education and Communication Committee.
- Served on the Board of Directors for the Big City Board of Realtors.
- Member of the CMA (Complete Marketing Advantage) Network Group (a networking group consisting of 40 full-time agents from six companies whose purpose is to sell listed properties faster).
- Recognized for attaining top listings and developing qualified prospects.
- Skilled entrepreneurial marketing and development of competitive business strategies.
- In-depth industry knowledge; proactive approach to forestall problems.
- Adept negotiator and closer who excels in business development and new market penetration.
- Equipped to compete in a fast-paced, aggressive sales environment.
- Persuasive and articulate communicator who functions effectively as part of a decision-making team.

PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS

Certified Property Manager (CPM) through Institute of Real Estate Management (IREM)
Licensed Maine Realtor

REALTOR/ SALES ASSOCIATE

Woodland Properties - Your Town, ME **April 2001- Present**
Top-producing sales associate with thorough knowledge of Northern Maine. Handled complex transactions and all administrative functions. Continuously increased sales and maintained profitability each year.

PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER

Robert's Property Management - My Town, ME **June 1992 - April 2001**
Launched startup of this diversified real estate investment, development, and asset management company, and built its property management portfolio to 1,000+ residential units and 1,000,000+ sq. ft. of commercial property. Established relationships with property owners, builders, and developers throughout the region, and negotiated favorable, multiyear management contracts.

Created a complete property management function, recruited experienced personnel, designed accounting and financial reporting processes, and implemented PC technologies for expanded portfolio analysis and management reporting capabilities.

Represented private investors, banks (REO's) and limited partnerships. Consistently successful in maximizing asset value through measurable gains in occupancy, tenant satisfaction, retention, and operating cost reduction.

Employers often request that you submit your résumé using their online application system. You can use the formatted résumé you created and convert it to a plain text electronic version suitable for pasting into online forms or e-mail messages.

A plain text résumé, which carries the .txt or .rtf file extension, is stripped of virtually all its formatting and is not especially visually appealing. This is fine, since its main purpose is to be placed into one of the keyword-searchable databases that the vast majority of today's large employers now use.

Follow these steps to create a text-only version of your résumé:

1. Open your document in your word processing application such as Microsoft Word®.
2. Be sure your margins are set no smaller than one inch.
3. Change all text to 12-point size and eliminate any formatting (i.e., bold, italics, underlining, etc.)
4. Convert to a plain font, such as Courier or Monaco.
5. Remove all graphics.
6. Replace all special characters such as bullets, em dashes, and en dashes with characters such as asterisks and hyphens.
7. Avoid using all capital letters except in main headings.
8. Left justify all text.
9. Replace tab stops with spaces.
10. Save this version as “Rich Text Format” (.rtf) or “Plain Text” (.txt). [*If you are using your home computer, you can save this file on your hard drive. If you are using a public computer, you must save this file on a portable drive or disk such as a USB flash drive.*]
11. Open this new file with a plain text editor such as Notepad (found in the computer’s accessory menu).
12. Proofread your new text-only résumé carefully, as some text may run together. Also, check for (and replace) any remaining special characters that appear as question marks, square blocks, or other odd characters.
13. Consider e-mailing it to yourself or someone else with a different e-mail program (or computer system) so that you can confirm the results.

Tips for Success

Use keywords

- Résumés stored in a database are retrieved and scored by these keywords
- Scanning systems look for specific ‘keywords,’ ‘buzzwords’ or ‘tags’
- The more keywords found, the greater the relevancy score
- Refer to the actual job description for applicable keywords
- Include technical, management, software, and organizational skills relevant to the position

Cover Letters

Every résumé you send, fax or e-mail needs its own cover letter. Sending a résumé without a cover letter is like starting an interview without a handshake.

Parts of the Cover Letter

Cover letters should be written in standard business format. Most cover letters are two to three paragraphs longs, and should fit on one page.

Contact information

The following information should be found at the top of the letter:

- Your contact information
- Today's date
- The reviewer's contact information

Salutation

Whenever possible, send your letter to a specific person. If the reviewer's name is not in the posting, call the company and ask who is hiring for the position.

- Double check the spelling of the name.
- Use "Dear Mr./Ms. _____:"

Opening

The first few sentences should tell the reviewer what position you are applying for and how you learned of the opening. Explain why you are interested in the position and how you are the perfect candidate to fill the job.

Body

The next paragraph is a brief explanation of your qualifications.

- Don't simply repeat what is in your résumé.
- Summarize your most relevant qualifications or provide additional details about a noteworthy accomplishment.
- Use descriptive words from the job advertisement.
- You can address any gaps in your work history here.

Closing

In your final paragraph, tell the reviewer what you would like to happen next.

- Request an interview.
- Tell them how they can reach you.
- Thank the reviewer for his or her time.

Signature

Sincerely,

(Leave 4 lines to sign your name)

Type your name

Bea Positive

789 Main Street • Anytown, ME 12345 • 207-555-1234 • b.positive@email.com

June 6, 2011

Contact person's name
Company
Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Ms. Contact:

Please accept the attached résumé as my application for the Assistant Manager position that was recently listed on Maine's Job Bank.

As you will see in my résumé, my background includes extensive customer service experience as well as management responsibilities. My strong attention to detail, proficiency in the use of Microsoft Office, together with my organizational skills enables me to help achieve the department productivity goals.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss with you how my skills and experience can best fit your needs. You can reach me by calling 207-555-1234.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration of my application. I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,

Bea Positive

Attachment: résumé

When and If to Follow Up

Should you follow up with an employer after you send in your résumé or application? If so, when?

If there was one answer to this question, it would be, “It depends.”

There are many considerations such as:

- how you applied for the job (was it a publicly posted listing?)
- if you had previous contact with anyone regarding the position (if you networked)
- how badly you want the job
- whether or not it is worth the effort
- if you are perfectly qualified or a long-shot

These days in this job market, employers sometimes hear from hundreds, or even thousands of applicants for one job opening. Calling the HR manager just to find out if they received your résumé or what the status is, can have a negative result – especially if only a few days have passed. Some jobs are posted for a few weeks and it can then take additional weeks for them to sift through the applicant pool.

On the other hand, a follow-up can show enthusiasm or ambition. It can be the one thing that gives you an edge over the other applicants. If you decide it is appropriate to follow up, here are a few guidelines to consider:

- Wait about two to three weeks after the closing date before you follow up. This will give the employer the opportunity to look through the résumés they received.
- Write a polite e-mail or handwritten note that reinforces your interest and skills.
- Don't call; HR managers are very busy and a phone call can be perceived as intrusive or pushy.
- If the employer is interested in you, they will respond to your follow-up. If you do not hear back, it would be best to move on.

You should follow up after an interview.

A time when you should always follow up is when you have had an interview.

- Make sure you leave the interview with an understanding of the time line for the hiring process.
- Within a few days, you should send a thank-you note that re-emphasizes your interest in the job and reminds them of your skills. **See the “After the Interview” section of this guide for more information.**
- If you have not heard back after the stated time line, a follow-up is appropriate.

References

A reference is someone who can speak from firsthand knowledge about the skills, abilities and personal qualities that would make you successful in the job for which you are applying. You will need three to five professional references.

Consider using the following people when assembling your list of references:

- previous supervisors
- professional acquaintances
- teachers
- co-workers
- probation officer
- clergy member
- guidance counselor

Good references should be well-spoken and employed in a responsible position. They should be people who have worked with you in paid or volunteer work experiences and able to be reached easily during regular business hours.

Once you have selected your list of references, make sure to:

- contact each person and ask permission to list them
- confirm their current contact information
- keep them informed about upcoming interviews and your job search progress
- give them a copy of your résumé to help them prepare to talk positively about you

Tips for Success

What to say to a potential reference

If your reference is someone that you do not keep in contact with on a regular basis, you should call or send a note to them asking if you can use them as a reference. Even if that person told you a long time ago that you could use them, it is polite and helpful for them to be aware that they may get a call about you. Here is an example of what you might say in a note:

Hi _____

How have you been? When we spoke a short time ago, you indicated that you would be pleased to serve as a reference for me, should I need to use your name. I have a job interview this Wednesday, (date) with (name of company). I would like to include you on my list of references. Here is a copy of my résumé in case you need to refer to it.

I really appreciate your time and help with this.

Thank you!

Bea Positive

Preparing your Reference Page

List your references on a separate sheet of paper that matches your cover letter and résumé paper. The only information on the page should be your contact information just as it looks on your résumé and the contact information for your three to five references. Include the following information about your reference:

- name
- job title
- company
- address
- daytime phone number
- e-mail address

Tips for Success

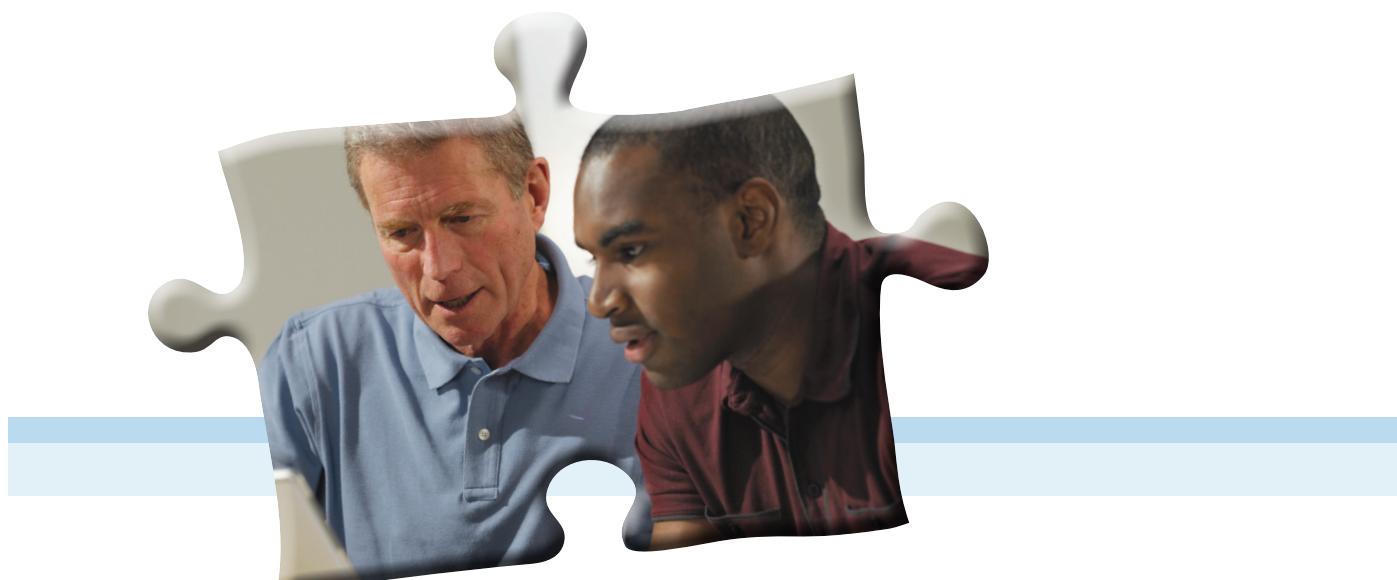
Reference DON'Ts

The list of supervisors in your work history on a job application is not the same thing as a reference list. When compiling your list **NEVER:**

- assume that just because someone worked with you, they will be willing or able to give you a positive reference
- use family members
- write letters for yourself and sign another person's name
- have a friend pretend to be a former co-worker or supervisor

Letter of Recommendation

A **letter of recommendation** is different than a reference. This is an open letter that you ask people to write about you in support of your skills and abilities in the workplace. Ask the letter writer for multiple signed copies of the original, or make photocopies to hand out and keep the original. Take this letter with you to an interview and ask the interviewer if they would like for you to leave a copy with them.



Lewis Layne

123 Eastern Court • Coastal City, Maine 12345 • 207-525-1234 • lewis@email.com

REFERENCES

Jane Doe

Director

County DOED

123 Main St.

Coastal City, ME

207-123-4567

jane@email.com

John Smith

Advisor

Kindercare

5 State St.

Smalltown, ME

207-123-4567

john@email.com

Mary Shelley

Teacher

Kindercare

5 State St.

Smalltown, ME

207-123-4567

mary@email.com



Interviews

You have caught the employer's attention and they have asked you to come in for an interview.

This is your opportunity to show the potential employer who you are and why you are perfect for the job. You can make the most of this opportunity by being prepared, presenting a professional demeanor, and describing your qualifications well.



The CareerCenter offers workshops on interviewing. To find out about workshops available in your area, visit: www.mainecareercenter.com/employment/workshops.

Tips for Success

How today's Maine employers approach interviews

These are statements that real Maine employers have made at the CareerCenter.

"If we called you in for an interview, we already think you're qualified..."

"Your interview starts with the first interaction...through e-mail, phone, online application, résumé, etc..."

"When I interview someone, I want them to make it easy for me to understand how what they've done will help my organization."



**Look for this icon throughout
the guide to find specific ways
that the CareerCenter can help
you with your job search!**



Types of Interviews

There are a few different types of interviews. And although they often have different purposes, they all require basic interviewing skills. Your entire interview process may include one or more of these types of interviews.

Phone interview

Many times this serves as a **screening interview**, designed to narrow down the applicant pool.

- Answer the phone only if you have the time and place for a professional conversation. You can always return the call later.
- Treat this interview like an open-book test. Have notes and a copy of the job posting handy.
- Be prepared to discuss experience and salary requirements.
- If successful, this may lead to a second interview.

Face-to-face interview

When you are asked to come in to the place of business, you may end up participating in a series of interviews. Every interview process is different, but you should be prepared for several possibilities.

- These interviews often start with human resources staff.
- If successful, you might next speak with the hiring manager.
- You may end up coming in for second or third interviews over a number of weeks.

Panel interview

This would also be a face-to-face interview, with more than one interviewer.

- Generally, there is an interview team consisting of the hiring manager and other staff members.
- The panel may take turns asking pre-determined questions.
- Often the questions will be the same for every applicant.

Interview Preparation

A good job interview takes preparation. This can be just as important as the interview itself.

Research

The best way to prepare yourself for an interview is to research both the company and the position that you are interviewing for. Before arriving, you should know:

- what the company does
- how large it is
- any recent changes it has undergone
- what role you could play in the organization

You can **start your research by finding and reading the company's website**. Click on the “About Us” link. Sites often include a history of the company and a description of their products and customers. An annual report is also a great source for information on a company.

Benefits of research

- You will be able to use your knowledge about the company to answer questions about how you will use your own skills to get the work done.
- Showing your initiative to do your homework tells the employer you have genuine enthusiasm for the job and the company.

Review the job description

Read the job description and responsibilities over and over. Make notes about how your experience and skills fit the position. Think of specific examples from past jobs to illustrate how your skills and experience match the organization’s needs. This will help the employer to actually “see” you in the position.

The salary question

Know what you are worth

During the interview, you may be asked what salary you are seeking. Do not bring up the salary question in the interview unless you are asked. Be prepared to answer the question with a range, and let them know that it is negotiable. They may be asking you this question to determine if you fall within their range; and that information may be used in making their hiring decision. Make sure that you have all of the information you need to determine what salary range you should ask for. **For more information on salary information resources, see the “When They Make You an Offer” section of this guide.**

Tips for Success

What is a Range?

A **pay or salary range** is a window of pay that is appropriate for a particular job. At one end is the minimum dollar amount that you are willing to accept; at the other end is a more ambitious figure. Ideally, you want to negotiate to something in the middle. A range could either be stated as an hourly rate or annual salary.

For example:

\$15 to \$18 per hour

\$30,000 to \$35,000 per year

Practice

Another important step in preparing for an interview is to practice describing your professional characteristics and to practice answering common interview questions. By practicing out loud beforehand when you are not under pressure, you will strengthen your answers during the actual event.

As a starting point, try to respond to the following questions:

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why should I hire you?
- What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
- Tell me about a difficult decision you made.
- What did you like most about your last job?
- Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or keep it.
- Describe a time when you encountered a work or school-related problem and how you solved it.
- Tell me about a time when you worked as part of a team.

When responding, focus on subjects related to your professional life, not your personal life.

Tips for Success

Develop an “Elevator Pitch”

An elevator pitch is a short (30 to 60 second) description of yourself and what you can offer. Elevator pitches quickly and simply define and sell a product, idea, service or organization. In this case, the product is YOU.

**This is an ideal response to the dreaded
“Tell me about yourself.”**

Your elevator pitch answers these questions:

- What do you do?
- What are some of your key accomplishments and unique skills?
- What can you do for me?
- Why should I hire you?

Your elevator pitch becomes the basis for your résumé and all of your outreach and networking.

Steps to developing your pitch

1. Start with a welcoming introduction that pitches you and what you do.
2. Write down your top three to five professional or academic accomplishments using actions words like “I created, I led, or I organized.”
3. Describe what you can bring to the company or job that you are interviewing for.

Example:

I enjoy helping job seekers find employment by providing guidance and resources to take them to the next level.

My expertise in job skill analysis, consulting, and relationship management allows me to be a networking asset as a workshop facilitator.

Because of my varied background and relationships, I can help you with your business or job search strategy, and provide you with a connection that will ultimately help you build your own employment network.

Let me introduce myself; my name is _____.

Prepare questions to ask the interviewer

As a job candidate you also have an obligation to hold up your end of the conversation. You should ask questions that could not be answered through your research of the company or that arose during the interview.

You can ask these questions during the course of the interview or at the end. Interviewers usually end their part by asking if you have any questions.

Be prepared with three to five questions. They can be based on the company or the position. Ask them in an open-ended manner, meaning they cannot be answered by just “yes” or “no.”

Some examples of good open-ended questions:

- What are some of the skills and abilities necessary for someone to succeed in this job?
- What is the company’s policy on providing seminars, workshops, and training so employees can keep up their skills or acquire new ones?
- Could you describe your company’s management style and the type of employee who fits well with it?
- What kind of advancement opportunities are there?

Asking good questions shows that you came prepared, can think intelligently, and are genuinely interested in working for the company.

Remember: an interview is just as much an opportunity to find out if this is the right job for you, as it is for the employer to find out if you are right for the job.

Online Resources

Finding sample interview questions

The Internet is an excellent source for finding sample interview questions and answers. You can find endless lists and video examples by typing a phrase such as “job interview questions” or “what to ask at a job interview” into a search engine such as:

- **Google™** – www.google.com
- **Yahoo!®** – www.yahoo.com
- **Bing™** – www.bing.com
- **Ask.com ®** – www.ask.com



Personal Appearance and Conduct

Dress professionally

Securing a job is much easier if you look the part. A useful guideline is to dress as you would for an important day on that job.

Do's:

- Make sure clothes are clean and wrinkle-free
- Wear solid colors in a conservative style
- Limit the amount of jewelry you wear
- Keep hair neat and professional
- Wear moderate, conservative shoes
- Keep personal hygiene fresh with deodorant and breath mints
- Make sure hands and nails are well-groomed (you are sure to shake some hands, after all)
- Keep your cell phone turned off and out of sight

Don'ts:

- Put on heavy fragrance or make-up
- Display lots of tattoos or piercings (especially facial)
- Wear scuffed footwear, sneakers or flip-flops
- Wear a Bluetooth device on your ear

First Impression

The interview begins the moment you arrive. Everyone you encounter, from the receptionist to the hiring manager, will form an impression of you. To ensure that the impression is positive, remember that your words and mannerisms will affect the image you project.

Do's:

- Give yourself extra time to get to your interview
- Arrive on time
- When greeting people, smile and shake hands
- Make eye contact
- Maintain good posture

Don'ts:

- Use slang
- Chew gum or eat
- Smoke cigarettes
- Answer your cell phone
- Give curt, one-word answers
- Bring someone else along
- Use the interviewer's first name unless you are invited to do so

During the Interview

What to bring

- A neat-looking note pad and pen
- Copies of your résumé and references
- Samples of work (your portfolio) if appropriate
- Notes on points you want to make
- A list of questions you want to ask

What to say

- Try to keep the interview conversational, but let the interviewer lead.
- Show your enthusiasm and self confidence in your body language and tone of voice.
- Don't exaggerate your skills, but sell yourself.
- Be honest and positive about everything you say, especially about past employers and coworkers.
- Avoid giving vague answers. Give specific examples of what you have done in the past when responding to questions.
- Stop and consider an answer to a difficult or unexpected question. If the question is confusing, ask for clarification.
- If asked about potentially damaging information, such as gaps in work history or prior violations of the law, briefly acknowledge the circumstances and redirect the conversation toward the positive.
- Before you leave, make sure you understand the next step in the hiring process such as additional interviews and a time line for a hiring decision.
- Finally, if the position interests you, express your desire for the job.



Show your appreciation

Thank the interviewer twice

Be sure to thank the interviewer after the interview is over, and before you leave. Shake hands and thank them for the opportunity and their time.

Write a thank-you note within two days of the interview. The thank-you note is most effective when hand-written or typed and mailed through the postal service. An e-mail is also acceptable if you previously communicated with the interviewer in that way. Send the note to each person on the interview committee.

The thank-you note should re-emphasize your interest in the position and remind them of your relevant skills and qualifications. Making the effort to send a note shows initiative and enthusiasm for the job and can give you an edge over other candidates.

Sample Thank-You Note

Joey Jobseeker

987 Smith Avenue • Big City, ME 12345 • 207-525-1234 • email@jobseeker.net

June 23, 2011

Contact person's name

Company

Address

City, State Zip Code

Dear Ms. Contact:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me regarding the Realtor position. The more I learned about the position and requirements, the more I became interested and confident that my skills and background could be a good fit.

I remain interested and hopeful at the possibility of joining your team.

Best regards,

Joey Jobseeker

Follow Up

- Make sure you leave the interview with an understanding of the time line for the hiring process.
- If you have not heard back after the stated time line, a follow-up is appropriate.
- Write a polite e-mail or handwritten note that reinforces your interest and skills.
- If the employer is interested in you, they will respond to your follow-up. If you do not hear back, it would be best to move on.

Employment Tests

Some employers and temporary agencies use tests to choose the most qualified candidates for a job. These tests relate directly to being competent in a particular job.

Employment tests usually fall into four categories; an employer may utilize more than one:

- Personality
- Intelligence
- Job knowledge
- Situational judgment

These tests may be administered online, at the place of employment or at another location.

Tips for Success

Test taking tips

- Listen to or read all of the information carefully and be sure you understand the different parts of the test.
- If you take a “speed” test, work as quickly as you can without making mistakes. Remember “speed” tests are designed so they can’t be completed in the allotted time.
- Do not work too long on any one question. Go to the next question, then come back if you have time.
- Always review your answers if you have time.
- Be careful if you change an answer. Your first choice has a better chance of being accurate.
- Sometimes clues from later questions will help solve earlier ones.
- Remember testing is only one part of the interview or application process.



Accepting an Offer

Most experts recommend waiting a short period of time before accepting a job offer, even if you plan to say ‘yes.’ Express your appreciation and strong interest in the job, and ask any immediate questions that you have, but request at least 24 hours to consider the offer.

Think about the following issues while considering an offer:

- Work environment
- Responsibilities
- Wage or salary
- Insurance benefits (medical, dental, life, and disability)
- Sick and vacation leave
- Medical and other pre-tax accounts
- Retirement plan options
- Profit sharing or stock options
- Parking or transportation
- Child care needs
- Flexible scheduling

Don’t be afraid to ask employers for additional benefits or flexibility that you might require, but avoid submitting a list of demands. Understand that many employers may want to meet your needs but may not be able to do so.

Once you have considered the offer, decide promptly if you will take the position and respond to the person making the offer. If you decide to accept, ask for the offer in writing to protect yourself. If you turn it down, do so professionally – you never know when you will cross paths with that employer again.



Source:

U. S. Department of Labor,
Employment and Training Administration
CareerOneStop
www.careeronestop.org

Salary Negotiation

Negotiating a salary is an important part of the job search process. But it requires professionalism and respect; it can set the tone for your work life and experience with the employer. Remember too, that negotiating is a two-way street, and use the following tips to guide you through the negotiating process.

Evaluate the offer wisely:

- Identify the salary you can reasonably expect for the type of position.
- Identify your own salary needs according to your household budget.
- When you receive an offer, evaluate it in relation to the job's other characteristics, including work environment, benefits, and relevance to your long-term career and life goals. Talk it over with someone you respect. Make a list of the pros and cons of the job offer.

Communicate effectively:

- Listen carefully. If the offer is less than you expected, let them know that, but state that you're still interested in the position if they want to reconsider their offer.
- Begin any salary negotiation with reasonable requests and be willing to accept compromises like receiving additional benefits in place of a higher salary.
- Negotiations should never become emotional or hostile. Use your value, skills, experience and education to negotiate. Don't use your need for the job or a certain salary to negotiate.

Understand the rules of the game:

- Don't assume the first offer is fixed. Even if the interviewer tells you so – it rarely is.
- If the same figure is offered a couple of days later, it probably is the last offer. In that case, you can ask for a salary review in six months to evaluate your performance and value, or you can turn the job down, asking that they keep you in mind for future openings that pay more money.
- Even when saying "no," leave the door open to negotiation. (Don't use this to negotiate a higher wage. When you say "no," be ready to lose the job offer for good.)
- When you reach an agreement, request the agreement in writing.

Online Resources

Maine Department of Labor's Center for Workforce Research and Information (CWRI)

www.maine.gov/labor/lmis

This website provides job seeker information such as what jobs are in demand, what skills are involved, how much positions pay, labor market trends, and employment projections.

CareerOneStop

www.careeronestop.org/SalariesBenefits

This tool uses the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) program from the U.S Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. The database contains employment and wage estimates for over 800 occupations, and allows you to search by occupation and location.





Reality Check

Whether faced with a job layoff or looking for a new career, a job search can be a stressful time. This time of transition may require you to make adjustments to your lifestyle.

Survival Jobs

Sometimes you need to get a job (any job) right away. You have to feed your family, pay the rent or make the car payment. You are willing to take any honorable work you can find quickly. These jobs are sometimes called “survival jobs” because you might take them to make ends meet.

Some survival jobs are entry-level jobs. Other jobs are available because of high employee turnover. Most people can qualify for these jobs without a lot of specialized training. Some people enjoy these jobs, but many people do not. If you find you must accept a job that does not match your worker preferences, do not give up your dream of a job you might like better. In the meantime, do this job to the best of your ability. If you decide to move on, always be professional and give two weeks notice.

Benefits of taking a “Survival Job”

- You can continue your job search while working.
- It may not be a career job or ideal job but if given it a chance, you may find you like it.
- It could lead to advancement with ladders to a desired position.
- A survival job can build new skills, knowledge, and work history.
- The income can keep you afloat financially while you continue to job search.
- If you are seeking a first job, then a survival job can help you build your work history.
- If you have been fired or have a less-than-perfect work record, then a good record in any job will help you rebuild your work history.



Budget Considerations

If you have suddenly found yourself out of a job, reduced income requires your utmost attention and skill in managing your money. There are resources in the community to help you, but the first thing you must do is plan ahead.

- **Don't go into hiding!**

Notify your creditors, lenders and landlord that you are unemployed and may not be able to meet your current obligations. Ask to have a payment plan for your new situation.

- **Prioritize your expenses and debts.**

Housing, food and transportation come first. Set up a realistic budget that allows for basics – food, shelter, clothing and medical care.

- **Stop buying nonessentials.**

Do not use credit cards to maintain your current standard of living.

- **Avoid bankruptcy by getting credit counseling.**

For financial counseling and debt management call: **Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Maine** at 1-800-308-2227, www.cccsme.org.

- **Let all family members in on the new budget.**

Encourage them to identify ways they can help save money.

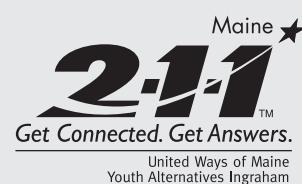
- **Find new and no-cost family recreation and entertainment activities.**

- **Above all, stay healthy and active.**

Online Resources

www.211maine.org

One number – thousands of services. 2-1-1 is an easy-to-remember number that connects people who want to give help or get help with a full range of health and human services in their community.



2-1-1 Maine, Inc. is a nonprofit organization formed in partnership with United Ways of Maine and Youth Alternatives Ingraham to provide a health and human services information and referral service system to serve the entire State of Maine — every day and in times of crisis.

You can access this statewide directory of over 9,000 resources either by dialing 211 on your phone or online at: www.211maine.org

Needs vs. Wants

Knowing the difference between a need and a want can help you prioritize your expenses.

Need: something you have to have

Want: something you would like to have

Absolute necessities

In actuality, you only need three things to survive:

- A roof over your head
- Enough food and water to maintain your health
- Clothing (just what you need to remain comfortable and appropriately dressed)

Near necessities

These things are not necessary for survival, but are important to be able to function in society:

- Reliable transportation
- Health care
- Utilities (electric, gas, water)
- Telephone
- Personal care
- Child care

Everything that goes beyond this – a big house, name-brand clothes, fancy foods and drinks, a new car – is a **want**. Of course some wants are important for your happiness in the long term, but knowing that there is a difference between needs and wants can help you find things that can be cut out in the short term if necessary.

When to ask for help

If you cannot provide any of the things listed under “absolute necessities” for you or your family, find help immediately. You can start by calling **2-1-1 Maine** [dial 211 on your phone]. You can also be referred to resources that may help you with items on the “near necessities” list.

Don’t give up!

In a challenging job market, it is not unusual for a job search to last six months or more. Do not be upset when you do not get a job offer at every job interview.

- Try to learn from these experiences.
- Keep reevaluating your job search tools.
- Treat your job search like a full-time job.
- Use the resources of the Maine CareerCenter.



Index of Online Resources

Maine CareerCenter – www.mainecareercenter.com

The Maine CareerCenter provides a variety of employment and training services at no charge for Maine workers and businesses. Through the website, you can search **Maine's Job Bank**, find information on CareerCenter programs and services, research training and education opportunities, and link to hundreds of other employment resources.

My Next Move – www.mynextmove.org

This tool is aimed at providing job seekers with information on more than 900 occupations, as well as local job openings and training opportunities in a simple, user-friendly format. My Next Move is intended to assist all job seekers. It may be especially useful for students, young adults and other first-time workers as they explore potential careers based on their interests.

mySkills myFuture – www.myskillsmymfuture.org

This site is designed to help those with previous work experience match their existing skills to new occupations.

CareerOneStop – www.careeronestop.org

Your pathway to career success. This website, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, contains tools to help job seekers, students, businesses, and career professionals.

Center for Workforce Research and Information (CWRI) – www.maine.gov/labor/lmis

CWRI gives job seekers the power to make important career decisions based on up-to-date labor market information. This website provides job seeker information such as what jobs are in demand, what skills are involved, how much positions pay, labor market trends, and employment projections.

2-1-1 – www.211maine.org

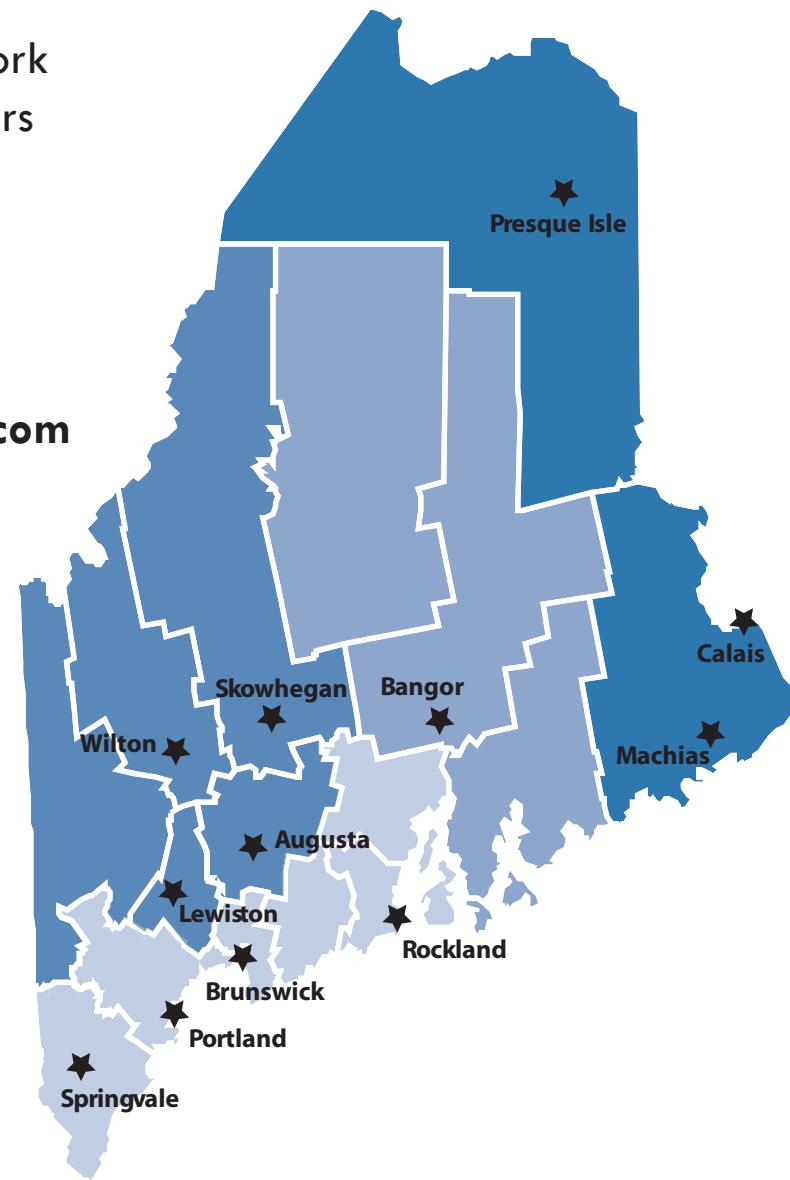
One number – thousands of services. 2-1-1 is an easy-to-remember number that connects people who want to give help or get help with a full range of health and human services in their community.



The Maine CareerCenter network consists of 12 full-service centers and additional service points and partner providers located throughout the state.

For a complete list of locations, visit: www.mainecareercenter.com

Or call 1-888-457-8883
TTY users call Maine Relay 711



www.mainecareercenter.com

The Maine Department of Labor provides equal opportunity in employment and programs.
Auxiliary aids and services are available to individuals with disabilities upon request.